

THE ASSEMBLY

The Assembly would:

- a. Cover both social work and social care, recognising that social care is now the over-riding disciplinary area, but with social work as the lead discipline and profession within social care.
- b. Have as its focus social care and social work education, training and research, to give the Assembly a lead role in promoting and protecting the values, knowledge and skills base of social care and social work.

This focus was seen as particularly important at a time with social care and social work are being managed and delivered within settings which are not immediately identifiable as being lead social care/social work agencies and organisations, such as the integrated services being developed with Health, the integrated services being developed with Education, and the new configurations of multi disciplinary teams being developed within the voluntary sector (eg family centres) and within the statutory sector (eg youth offending teams and drug action teams). It was particularly timely, therefore, to develop and promote a lead umbrella and networking organisation for social care and social work at this time. This ought to be recognised by, for example, the Department of Health as an important means of championing social care and social work whilst not opposing the new configurations for service delivery and management, which are being developed.

- c. The Assembly should cover all of the UK administrations (ie England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland) and also have links with international learning and development.
- d. The Assembly should be a 'virtual organisation', acting as a network co-ordinating, for example, views and perspectives from member organisations. As such, it would not have a very extensive organisation infrastructure. There might need to be some secretariat capacity (for administration) and some development capacity (to get the Assembly organised and up and running). This might be funded by seeking a grant from a relevant grant auditing body (or indeed possibly from the Department of Health). This would be less complicated than seeking a subscription membership arrangement.
- e. The work programme of the Assembly ought to be relatively modest, as, in effect, its role is to bring together constituent organisations to create a coherent and common voice for social care and social work education and research. This might be achieved by having annual Assembly meetings, and with any statements/proposals prepared by the Assembly being drafted by members of constituent organisations working together as relevant. In this way the Assembly does not set itself up as an over-arching body beyond the other organisations but as a network for those organisations.

- f. The focus of the Assembly on promoting the values, knowledge base and skills of social care and social work through social care and social work education, training and research would keep the Assembly centred on social care and social work education research rather than, for example, on having employer and service provider organisations within the Assembly's network.

The Assembly would:

1. Protect, promote and develop the values, knowledge and skills of social care and social work.
2. Contribute to effective practice and policy that delivers positive outcomes for service users.
3. Network across UK social care and social work education, training and research representative organisations, and
4. Foster and maintain interaction between the Assembly and Government bodies and key agencies involved in the changing delivery of social care and social work services.